

Message Text

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FOR HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, SHUM, RP

SUBJ: MARCOS' RELATIONSHIP TO THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY

REF: STATE 304795

1. SUMMARY: MARCOS IS CLEARLY IN CHARGE OF THE PHILIPPINE
MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THERE IS SOME INTERPLAY OF PERSON-
ALITIES WITHIN THIS IMPORTANT POWER ELEMENT; HOWEVER, WE
SEE NO INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WITH A DISPOSITION TO CHALLENGE

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MARCOS ON MAJOR ISSUES, INCLUDING THE BASES. MARCOS CARES
ABOUT MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEEDS BUT WE BELIEVE HE COULD
ACCEPT CONSIDERABLY LESS HARDWARE THAN REQUESTED DECEMBER 22 AND
NOT HAVE UNMANAGEABLE PROBLEMS IN HOLDING ALL SIGNIFICANT
ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY IN LINE. END SUMMARY

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARCOS AND THE PHILIPPINE

MILITARY (AFP) IS COMPLEX. THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT MARCOS IS THE MAN IN CHARGE. WE CURRENTLY SEE NO INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WHICH SHOWS A DISPOSITION TO CHALLENGE HIM ON ANY MAJOR ISSUE, INCLUDING THE BASES. AFP PERSONNEL FROM CHIEF OF STAFF ESPINO DOWN FOLLOW HIS LEADERSHIP WITHOUT SERIOUS QUESTION. MARCOS IS CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN THE RESPECT OF THE MILITARY AND TO TEND TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL NEEDS. BUT MARCOS CALLS THE SHOTS.

3. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE DOES RAISE SPECIAL PROBLEMS. MARCO' PRIMARY REQUIREMENT OF THE MILITARY IS TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL SECURITY, MORE PARTICULARLY TO PROTECT HIS REGIME. HE WANTS THE AFP TO DO THAT JOB WELL, WORRYING NOT SO MUCH THAT HUMAN RIGHTS RESTRAINTS HE IMPOSES WILL LEAD TO A MILITARY REACTION HE CAN'T HANDLE BUT RATHER THAT MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS IN MAINTAINING CONTROL OVER POTENTIAL THREATS TO THE REGIME MIGHT BE DIMINISHED.

4. ON MATTER RELATNG TO BASE TALKS, MARCOS RETAINS PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY. THIS HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN DISCUSSIONS TO DATE. HE IS SENSITIVE TO AFP CONCERNS ABOUT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD HAVE NO SERIOUS TROUBLE IN HOLDING THE MILITARY IN LINE FOR SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN THE LIST PRESENTED TO

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US ON DECEMBER 22. AN ACCEPTABLE PACKAGE MIGHT NOT GO MUCH BEYOND A MISSILE SYSTEM, RADAR, NAVAL PATROL CRAFT, TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND SOME GROUND SUPPORT HARDWARE BACKED WITH ASSURANCES OF OUR BEST EFFORT IN HELPING WITH FUTURE REQUIREMENTS.

5. WE BELIEVE MARCOS' PRIMARY OBJECTIVES IN THE BASE TALKS FALL IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

A. SECURE A TANGIBLE EXPRESSION FROM THIS ADMINISTRATION OF CONTINUED INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE PHILIPPINES, MORE PARTICULARLY HIS REGIME;

B. SECURE COMPENSATION FOR THE BASES EITHER THROUGH MILITARY HARDWARE OR MORE GENERAL ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

C. OBTAIN MORE VISIBLE US RECOGNITION OF PHILIPPINE SOVEREIGNTY, ESPECIALLY BY MAKING THE BASES APPEAR MOR PHILIPPINE.

WE SEE NO POWER ELEMENT IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WITH A DISPOSITION OR CAPABILITY TO CHALLENGE MARCOS ON THESE OBJECTIVES.

6. ENRILE IS A SPECIAL CASE. HE HAS LONG BEEN CLOSE TO MARCOS AND KNOWS WHERE THE SKELETONS ARE BURIED. HE IS ILOCANO, LOYAL AND TACTICALLY CLEVER IN A PINCH. HE IS COASTING AT NATIONAL DEFENSE, DOING ENOUGH TO STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOSS AND TO MAINTAIN THE RESPECT OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES. HSI PERSONAL OBJECTIVE SEEMS TO BE TO HOLD ON FOR PRESENT BENEFITS AND TO TRY TO BE THE MILITARY'S MAN WHENEVER MARCOS MIGHT PASS FROM THE SCENE. HIS ANTI-PATHY FOR MRS. MARCOS, THE PRIMARY OBSTACLE TO AN EVENTUAL STEP UP, IS EVIDENT.

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ENRILE COMES CLOSER THAN THE OTHERS TO HAVING THE PERSONALITY TO BUCK MARCOS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. BUT WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT HE DOES. PERHAPS BECAUSE HE HAS ALREADY HAD SOME CLOSE SCRAPES DUE TO THIS PROBLEMS WITH MRS. MARCOS. HE IS CAUTIOUS AND HAS OCCASIONALLY CONFIDED THAT HE IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT HIS FUTURE. WE ARE LESS CONCERNED THAT ENRILE WILL SERIOUSLY PRESSURE MARCOS THAN BY THE FACT THAT HE DOES NOT DO HIS HOME-WORK, OFTEN TRYING TO COVER HIS DEFICIENCIES BY THROWING UP EXTRANEOUS AND DISTRACTING ISSUES WITH WHICH HE IS ONLY VAGUELY FAMILIAR. (RECENT EXAMPLES OF THIS DISTURBING CHARACTERISTIC WERE HIS PATENTLY FALSE CHARGE SEPTEMBER 22 THAT THE USG HAD TURNED DOWN THE GOP ON RADAR AND HIS ASSERTION OUT OF THE BLUE NOVEMBER 25 THAT AREMS FROM SUBIC HAD GONE TO THE NPA. HIS INEPT STEWARDSHIP OF THE EQUIPMENT LIST SEEMS ALSO ILLUSTRATIVE OF HIS LACKADAISICAL OPERATIONAL STYLE).

7. ENRILE, ESPINO, VER, AND RAMOS ALL LOOK UP TO MARCOS. HE IS THE REASON THEY ARE WHERE THEY ARE. NONE QUESTIONS HIS LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME INEVITABLE FRICTIONS BETWEEN THESE LIEUTENANTS. VER AND RAMOS WOULD EACH LIKE TO BE CHIEF OF STAFF. ESPINO MAY TALK ABOUT RETIRING BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WANTS TO HOLD THE POWER AND PREROGATIVES OF HIS POSITION. AS INDICATED ABOVE, ENRILE ALSO WANTS TO HOLD ON. MARCOS IS THE KEY TO ALL OF THESE ASPIRATIONS. WE DO NOT SEE THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MARCOS' LIEUTENANTS AFFECTING THE BASE DISCUSSIONS AT THIS TIME. ALL FAVOR THE RETENTION OF A SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. THIS INCLUDES ENRILE DESPITE HIS CRITICAL COMMENTS. HE IS SOMETHING OF A POKER PLAYER AND CLAIMS TO KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS FROM THE AMERICANS. THIS MAY PARTLY EXPLAIN HIS

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BEHAVIOR. THE KEY POINT IS THAT HE IS BRIGHT, DIFFIDENT AND UNPREDICTABLE. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE HE, ALONG WITH ESPINO, VER, RAMOS REMAIN CLEARLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF MARCOS AND WE SEE LITTLE PROSPECT OF THIS CHANGING.

8. WE SEE TWO PRIMARY OBJECTIVES IN THE MINDS OF PHILIPPINE MILITARY PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE BASE ISSUES.

A. MAINTENANCE OF A SECURITY LINKAGE WITH THE UNITED STATES;

B. ACQUISITION OF MILITARY HARDWARE.

THE DEPTH OF FEELING FOR EACH OBJECTIVE VARIES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS. ESPINO, RAMOS, AND BGEN BOCANEGR (CHIEF OF OPERATIONS) WOULD SEEM TO VALUE A OVER B. THE SERVICE CHIEFS RADM OGBINAR, MGEN SARMIENTO AND MGEN ABAT WOULD APPEAR TO LEAN MORE TO B, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY FOCUS MORE ON PERCEIVED EQUIPMENT DEFICIENCIES. VER'S POSITION IS NOT SPECIFICALLY KNOWN BUT CAN BE EXPECTED TO MIRROR THAT OF MARCOS. OUR CONCERN HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO THE MORE NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS, THE "CLASS OF '51," AND OTHERS, WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE DND SPECIAL TASKS GROUP (COL. SOLINA) AND THE AFP SPECIAL STUDY GROUP (BGEN MANIPULA). SOME PERSPECTIVE IS NEEDED HERE. WHILE THESE MORE INNOVATIVE GROUPS HAVE SOME APPEAL THROUGH MILITARY CIRCLES OR TWEAKING OUT NOSES AND PLAYING UP PHILIPPINE PRIDE, AT THIS TIME THEIR ROOTS ARE NOT DEEP AND THEIR CONSTITUENCIES NOT ORGANIZED. MANIPULA IS THE MOTOR FORCE OF THE STUDY GROUP. A COMPETENT AND DISCIPLINED MAN, MANIPULA IS NOT POPULAR WITH HIS PEERS AND HAS NO APPRECIABLE FOLLOWING. HE IS HIMSELF UNCERTAIN ABOUT HIS PROSPECTS, RECENTLY EXPRESSING DOUBT THAT HIS SERVICE WILL BE EXTENDED MUCH FURTHER (HE BEGAN A SECOND SIX MONTH EXTENSION BEYOND RETIREMENT IN NOVEMBER). (HE RECENTLY ASKED HELP IN RENTING HIS

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WIFE'S HOUSE TO AN EMBASSY FAMILY SO "I WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET.") IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT THE TOP WRITER IN COL SOLINA'S TASK GROUP, LT. EMMANUEL BRIONES, A WEST POINT GRADUATE WITH AN MA FROM NORTHWESTERN, WAS TRANSFERRED OUT TWO WEEKS AGO BECAUSE "SOMEONE DIDN'T LIKE ME." THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THESE GROUPS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THEM, WILL CONTINUE TO BE A FACTOR IN

THE EQUATION. THE POINT TO REMEMBER IS THAT THEY ARE NOT NOW WELL KNIT AND REMAIN UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE TO PAFP STAFF. THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT MARCOS CAN CONTROL THEM IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

9. COMMENT: IT REMAINS OUR VIEW THAT MARCOS WILL CAREFULLY LISTEN TO THE VIEWS OF HIS MILITARY SUBORDINATES AND THAT HE WILL TEND TO THEIR MOST PRESSING REQUIREMENTS. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT SEE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT PLACING SIGNIFICANT LIMITATIONS ON HIS AUTHORITY TO MAKE FINAL DECISIONS ON TREATY ISSUES. (IF THERE IS A DANGER, IT WOULD BE THAT SOMEONE MIGHT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NORMALLY FLACCID BUREAUCRACY TO DRAG HIS HEELS IN IMPLEMENTING ONE OR ANOTHER DECISION.) SHOULD WE BE ABLE TO HELP MEET SOME OF THE MOST REALISTIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE AFP IN AIR DEFENSE AND SEA SURVEILLANCE (A MISSILE SYSTEM, RADAR, NAVAL PATROL CRAFT, TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND SOME GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT) WE BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE FLEXIBILITY IN FULFILLING MARCOS' COMPENSATION EXPECTATIONS IN OTHER WAYS, WHETHER THAT BE AN ASSURANCE OF OUR BEST EFFORT ON FUTURE MILITARY HARDWARE NEEDS OR SOME FORM OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. NEWSOM UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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